

## NEW BIRD RECORDS FROM MALHEUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, OREGON

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Since Marshall (1959) first published unusual bird records at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Harney County, Oregon, several other reports have appeared (Kridler and Marshall 1962, Kridler 1965, Littlefield and McLaury 1973). The purpose of this report is to present data on species that had not been recorded on the refuge before 1973.

Formerly, most species new to the refuge were collected when possible and placed in either the refuge museum or the U.S. National Museum. Changes in refuge policy and visitor attitudes now preclude collection. The following accounts are for species new to the refuge since the last published report (Littlefield and McLaury 1973).

**CATTLE EGRET, *Bubulcus ibis*.** The first observation for the refuge and southeast Oregon occurred on 13 August 1974 when Eldon McLaury and I watched a Cattle Egret for about 30 minutes, 0.8 km N of Malheur Lake. The bird was feeding on insects flushed by a hay mower.

Several persons saw a single bird on 16 July 1976 and again from 30 April through 7 May 1977. Both were feeding in flooded meadows about 1.6 km W of refuge headquarters.

The species was first seen in Oregon in 1965 (Baldrige and Crowell 1966) and several records were reported by 1975, mostly west of the Cascade Range.

**WHITE-TAILED KITE, *Elanus leucurus*.** The species was first recorded in southeast Oregon when I saw a single bird near refuge headquarters on 7 October 1977. I observed the bird within 10 m, and it was seen repeatedly through 11 November by numerous other people. The individual was never seen more than 3 km from headquarters where it fed in mowed native meadows. The species has been seen previously east of the Cascade Range in central Oregon, and there are several records for western Oregon (Henny and Annear 1978).

**RED-SHOULDERED HAWK, *Buteo lineatus*.** Steve Herman saw an adult Red-shouldered Hawk about 64 km S of refuge headquarters near Frenchglen, Harney Co., on 8 August 1976. Stuart Croghan and I returned with Herman on 9 August and observed the hawk 0.4 km W of the original location. We watched the bird for some time as it attempted to roost in a group of cottonwoods (*Populus* sp.) adjacent to the Donner und Blitzen River. Eight Red-tailed Hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*) were also going to roost and continually harassed the Red-shouldered Hawk. Eventually the bird was driven away (southwest) and was not seen again. I know of no other recent record in eastern Oregon. The Red-shouldered Hawk breeds in appropriate habitat in the Central Valley and coastal lowlands of California (Small 1974). Since the late 1960s the species has been expanding its range into the eastern California deserts, northward along the coast into Humboldt County, California, and as far north as Curry County, Oregon (Crowell and Nehls 1976a). In northeastern California it was seen at Modoc NWR, Modoc County, 11 September 1976 and at Honey Lake, Lassen County, 10 September 1976 (Winter and Erickson 1977).

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In recent years the species has had reduced nesting success with most failures caused by disturbance from land clearing and tree cutting operations (McCaskie 1974). The current range expansion could be the result of habitat loss over much of its California nesting area.

**HERRING GULL, *Larus argentatus*.** An adult Herring Gull was found by David Fix et al. on 26 March 1977 on a small pond about 10 km NW of refuge headquarters. Caryn Talbot and I photographed it the same day. On 27 March two adults were present, accompanied by Ring-billed and California gulls (*L. delawarensis* and *L. californicus*). These were the first Herring Gull records for southeastern Oregon.

The species is apparently increasing in southern Idaho and eastern Washington. The increase may be attributed to water developments in a formerly waterless area. Sightings might be expected to increase in the northern Great Basin as more Herring Gulls use these inland water developments.

**SABINE'S GULL, *Xema sabini*.** The refuge recorded its first Sabine's Gulls on 17 September 1975 when Stuart Croghan and I observed two on Stinking Lake 48 km W of headquarters. Two other observers saw a single bird on 18 September 1975 at the same location. This represented the first record for eastern Oregon, and one of the few for inland Oregon.

This species is casual inland in the West. For example, there are six records for Nevada (Lawson 1977). Larrison and Sonnenberg (1968) describe it as a rare to fairly common fall migrant and irregular spring migrant in eastern Washington.

**COMMON TERN, *Sterna hirundo*.** Caryn Talbot and I watched a Common Tern on 19 September 1975 about 40 km W of headquarters. We watched the bird for about 20 minutes as it fed in a small pond. This is the first record for the refuge, but the species has been seen at four other locations in eastern Oregon.

A few breeding colonies are along the Columbia River in eastern Washington (Larrison and Sonnenberg 1968). Apparently most of the Washington birds migrate down the Columbia River to the Pacific Coast, with a few migrating overland into the northern Great Basin.

**BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD, *Selasphorus platycercus*.** On 9 May 1973 I heard and saw an adult male Broad-tailed Hummingbird about 48 km S of refuge headquarters. I examined the bird closely as it perched on dead willow (*Salix* sp.) branches and occasionally flew to other perches. This is the only record for the species on the refuge, but it has been seen on Steens Mountain which adjoins the refuge's southeast boundary (Gabrielson and Jewett 1940).

The species has been seen at several other Oregon localities. Both males and females have been observed in May and June near Shady Cove, Jackson Co., since 1968 (Browning 1975). Gabrielson and Jewett (1940) reported records from Malheur, Wallowa and Lake counties.

The species is known to nest in the White Mountains, Inyo Co., California (Small 1974) and in the mountains of eastern Idaho (Burleigh 1972). Possibly the Broad-tailed Hummingbird breeds in isolated mountain ranges in the northern Great Basin where little field work has been done and the extent of nesting is unknown.

**BLUE JAY, *Cyanocitta cristata*.** A Blue Jay was seen at refuge headquarters by Stuart Croghan, Frank Conley and me on 26 October 1975. The bird remained through 27 October and was seen by several other persons. Larry Napier and Steve Thompson saw and heard another bird at headquarters on 6 and 7 October 1977.

The species has been invading the Pacific Northwest from the plains states since the 1960s. It arrived at Victoria, British Columbia, in 1963 (Boggs and Boggs 1964) and was seen in Montana and Wyoming in the late 1960s.

Blue Jays became evident in eastern Idaho about 1972 (Kingery 1973) and in western Idaho about 1974 (Rogers 1974). They arrived in western Washington by 1971 (Mattocks et al. 1976). The species was first seen in eastern Oregon in December 1973 (Wayne Hoffman pers. comm.) and by the fall of 1976 had reached

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the Cascade Range. There are eight records from northern California (McCaskie et al. 1979).

The Blue Jay has already invaded portions of the range of the Steller's Jay (*C. stelleri*) and hybrids have been reported (Kingery 1972). Presently it is approaching the range of the Scrub Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) and the outcome of this inter-specific contact remains to be seen.

**BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER**, *Poliophtila caerulea*. On 5 June 1975 Homer Eshbaugh discovered a pair of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers near Page Springs, 64 km S of refuge headquarters. They were seen in the same area on 17 June and a nest with eggs was found in a Western Juniper (*Juniperus occidentalis*) in mid-July by Steve Herman and members of his ornithology class. Within 1 week the nest had been destroyed and the pair was not seen again.

The species has been reported nesting 385 km E of the refuge in Cassia Co., Idaho (Burleigh 1972), and 350 km W near Medford, Jackson Co., Oregon (Browning 1975).

**BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER**, *Dendroica virens*. William and Patty Wessinger and I saw an adult male Black-throated Green Warbler as it fed among willows about 3 km NE of refuge headquarters on 17 May 1975. The bird was associating with Townsend's and Wilson's warblers (*D. townsendi* and *Wilsonia pusilla*) and was observed for about 30 minutes. This was the first Black-throated Green Warbler record for eastern Oregon, but Tom Lund saw a female near Astoria, Clatsop Co., on 13 and 14 June 1974, and a differently patterned female was also present the second day.

In California the species is casual in spring and very rare in fall (Small 1974). Washington's first record occurred on 2 July 1975 when a singing male was found on Browne Mountain, near Spokane, Spokane Co. (Rogers 1975).

**BAY-BREASTED WARBLER**, *D. castanea*. On 7 June 1976 at 0900 David DeSante and students from Reed College saw and heard an adult male Bay-breasted Warbler at refuge headquarters. On the same day, at 1800, Caryn Talbot, Stuart Croghan and I watched and listened to the bird as it fed among coniferous trees. This was the first record for the refuge and the second for Oregon.

Oregon's first record occurred on 6 July 1963 when one was collected on the west side of Upper Klamath Lake, Klamath Co. (McCaskie and DeBenedictis 1964). A male was singing at the south end of Howard Prairie Lake, Jackson Co., on 22 June 1976 (Crowell and Nehls 1976b) and another at Davis Lake, Deschutes Co., on 13 and 22 August 1976 (Crowell and Nehls 1977) for the third and fourth state records.

Nevada's first record occurred in spring 1975 at Corn Creek, Clark Co. (Kingery 1975), and an immature was at Pocatello, Bannock Co., Idaho, on 10 October 1975 (Rogers 1976). I know of no records for Washington. In California the species is very casual in spring and casual in fall, with most records from the coast (Small 1974).

**ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK**, *Pheucticus ludovicianus*. Several records have accumulated in Oregon since the species was first seen at Lake Oswego, Clackamas Co., on 25-30 December 1972 (Crowell and Nehls 1973). At Malheur NWR the species was first seen on 19 May 1973 when members of the Corvallis Audubon Society and I observed an adult male at headquarters. This was the second state record. Since then an adult male was seen 64 km S of headquarters on 29 May 1976; a pair was at headquarters on 15 June 1976; an adult male was 45 km W of headquarters on 4 July 1976; an adult male was at headquarters on 11 October 1977; and an adult male was mist-netted, banded, photographed and released on 29 May 1978.

In addition to the above records, the species has been seen in Oregon at Leslie Gulch, Malheur Co.; Burns and Fields, Harney Co.; Eugene, Lane Co.; near Sisters, Deschutes Co.; and on Hart Mountain, Lake Co.

There are numerous records of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks from throughout California and several have been seen in Idaho. There is one record for Washington (Mat-tocks et al. 1976).

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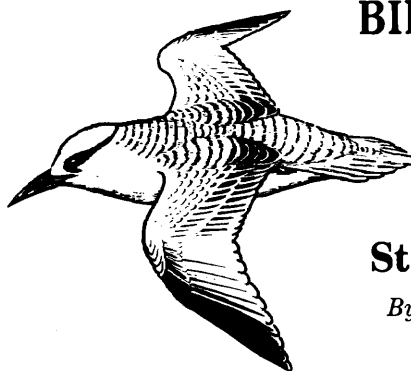
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Rose-breasted Grosbeak

*Sketch by Narca Moore*

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